



breakout ABSTRACT

Abstract No. 23

TITLE

LEGAL ISSUES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING PROJECT: LESSONS FROM MONTANA

TRACK

Collaboration/Diversity/Coordination

OBJECTIVES

This presentation seeks to communicate the importance of considering how laws may effect the development, implementation, and functioning of EPHT programs at the state level. Laws may greatly affect the ability of state officials to engage in EPHT and to collect and share the information necessary to enact a meaningful EPHT program.

SUMMARY

A successful EPHT program demands a robust information infrastructure to track relevant environmental factors and analyze their impact on population health. State statutes and regulations are key to the development of this information infrastructure. State laws may authorize or limit the ability of state agencies to acquire, use, retain, or disclose data on environmental hazards, environmental exposures, and health human effects. Consequently, statutes and regulations have a fundamental role in the ability of a state to effectively implement an EPHT system.

Many states have not yet assessed their state laws to determine whether they have sufficient legal authority to engage in all of the activities necessary for a robust and effective EPHT program. The state of Montana, by contrast, has taken a proactive approach in evaluating its state laws relevant to EPHT. This presentation will: 1) outline the major legal issues that may affect the development, implementation, and operation of EPHT at the state level, 2) describe the general findings of our assessment of state laws related to EPHT, 3) present an evaluation of statutory and regulatory infrastructure related to EPHT using the state of Montana as a case study; and 4) offer some preliminary recommendations on how states should approach the legal aspects of EPHT.

AUTHOR(S):

Lance Gable, J.D., M.P.H.

Wayne State University Law School

Lawrence O. Gostin, Georgetown University Law Center

